

FAHC Offers Recommendations on VSH Standards

Under the terms of its psychiatric services contract for Vermont State Hospital, Fletcher Allen Health Care has reviewed standards at the hospital and submitted recommendations to the Health Commissioner. The recommendations are posted on the Mental Health Update webpage.

Agency Contract With Sheriffs Addresses Restraints

An amendment to the contract the Agency of Human Services has with the sheriffs' departments for the transportation of people in custody is being circulated for signatures. New language agreed upon includes the following provisions:

- *When restraints are necessary, "non-metal ('soft') restraints are to be used whenever safe. The Division of Mental Health will provide soft restraints not otherwise available, at no additional cost to the individual Sheriff's Departments."*
- *"Sheriffs will incorporate the Law Enforcement Training Council's 'Mental Health and Law Enforcement' training into their regular training program for their personnel transporting mental health patients..."*
- *"The Sheriffs and the Division of Mental Health will work together to identify alternative methods of secure, safe, transports."*
- *"Representatives of the Sheriffs Departments and the Division will meet at least two times a year in order to improve communication, identify training and orientation needs for Sheriffs, mental health staff and others involved in transports, and to solve problems of coordination between the Sheriffs Departments, the mental health system, and others involved in transports."*
- *"Whenever feasible, Sheriff's Departments will use unmarked vehicles and will use non-uniformed officers when providing transport..."*
- *"Sheriffs have the final authority for decisions concerning use of restraints, vehicles or other equipment and personnel taking into account availability of resources and the safety of their staff, the public and the persons being transported."*

With the retirement of the Assistant Director of the Division of Mental Health, John Pierce, who had been handling the transportation and restraints issue, Children's Mental Health Director Charlie Biss has assumed that responsibility. Appearing before the Vermont Association for Mental Health's annual conference, Biss reported progress this week in achieving the Douglas Administration's goal of never transporting a minor in restraints unless restraints are clinically required.

DOJ Process Continues

On Monday, Commissioner Paul Jarris met with leaders from Vermont State Hospital and the Division of Mental Health and attorneys from the Attorney General's Office to review the progress of discussions with the federal Department of Justice. No further meetings between the two parties have been scheduled, but discussions have continued and Jarris remained optimistic that there is substantial agreement between the two sides.

Inpatient Work Group Prefers Designated Hospitals

Meeting on Tuesday, in a session marked by numerous votes, the Futures Initiative's inpatient work group made several decisions, which will be presented to the Futures Advisory Group as recommendations. The group already has recommended the creation of a primary inpatient site with one or two smaller inpatient capacities.

- After a discussion of the federal definition of IMD (Institution for Mental Diseases – a stand alone psychiatric hospital of more than 16 beds, or a general hospital with more than half its beds used for psychiatric care), the federal policy concerning Medicaid participation in IMDs, Vermont's experience with a waiver of the IMD exclusions under the 1115B Waiver, recent proposed federal legislation to allow federal participation for emergency admissions to IMDs in eight states, and how Vermont's Global Commitment development team approached the IMD issue with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the work group agreed unanimously to recommend
 - that the primary Vermont State Hospital replacement facility not be an IMD.
- The work group also agreed to recommend
 - that only Designated Hospital inpatient providers be considered for the primary Vermont State Hospital replacement program until such time as it is demonstrated that an agreement cannot be negotiated with one of these partners.
 - that preference be given to Designated Hospital inpatient providers for the smaller inpatient capacities until such time as it is demonstrated that an agreement cannot be negotiated with one of these partners.
- The work group strongly recommended that the planning for the Futures project, for both inpatient and community services, needs to occur in the context of considering the overall financial health of the Designated Hospital and Agency service providers.

Futures Initiative Meetings Coming Up

The schedule of meetings:

- Wednesday, November 9: Sub acute/secure residential work group, 9–11 a.m., Dr. Simpatico's office, Vermont State Hospital, Waterbury.
- Wednesday, November 16: Futures Advisory Group, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (note change of time), Room 100, Stanley Hall, Waterbury State Office Complex.
- Friday, November 18: Care management work group, 9-11 a.m., Conference Room 2, Central Vermont Hospital, Berlin

Co-Occurring Disorder Treatment Services

Vermont's community mental health centers are demonstrating their dedication to providing integrated co-occurring disorders treatment for clients with severe and persistent mental illness in their Community Rehabilitation and Treatment Programs. The findings from recent Department of Health evaluation site visits indicate that substantial progress has been made in the implementation of integrated treatment in these programs. Incentive grants of \$2,500 per agency are being sent out to the participating agencies and detailed reports are in progress.

Upcoming Evidenced Based Practice Training and Evaluation grant activities are focused on coordinating a training to establish housing options for this consumer group. A November 10 workshop is being offered to broaden the knowledge base across housing providers and strengthen collaborations between housing and treatment providers. Trainer for this workshop is Mary Woods RNC, LADC, MSHS, chief executive officer for The Westbridge Institute, who has more than 25 years experience working with and establishing residential programs for consumers with co-occurring disorders. Woods will share her knowledge of lessons learned from implementing and sustaining residential treatment services for individuals with dual disorders and will facilitate discussions aimed at helping attendees identify housing service gaps and barriers and begin planning for better meeting the needs of consumers with co-occurring disorders.

Lamoille Agency Re-designation Feedback Requested Through Nov. 10

The departments of Health and of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) are in the active phase of reviewing Lamoille County Mental Health Services for re-designation as the mental health and developmental services provider for that catchment area. Public feedback can be made until November 10 by visiting www.healthyvermonters.info/mh/public_comment.htm.

VSH Census

The Vermont State Hospital census was 44 as of midnight Thursday night. The average census for the past 45 days was 46.

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www.healthyvermonters.info/mh/mhindex.shtml